

## **REMARKS FOR ADMINISTRATOR BOLDEN**

### **EULOGY FOR JOHN GLENN**

Dec. 17, 2016

This week our nation has been mourning the loss of one of its greatest heroes, John Glenn. His passing has affected me deeply, but in the spirit of optimism that he always radiated, I'd also like us to remember his many achievements and the pioneering spirit that he exemplified.

I also want to thank Annie and the entire Glenn family for sharing their husband, father and grandfather with the world. Every one of us on planet Earth benefited from having him on our team.

Annie, you and John exemplified what it means to be united as a couple. Your love and friendship over 73 years is unlike anything I've ever seen.

I'm glad and incredibly blessed that I was able to witness your devotion. I hope that Jackie and I can emulate your lifetime of love.

I was so moved and humored when I called John and Annie earlier this year to congratulate them on their 73<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary. When John put Annie on the phone, she said, "You know, Charlie, I think this thing just might work."

John Glenn always said "yes." "Yes" to his country's call in the U.S. Marine Corps. "Yes" to being the first American to orbit the Earth as one of the Mercury 7. "Yes" to his state's nomination to serve in the Senate and "Yes" to the ongoing call of his nation to help it forge a path through a new millennium.

It was the courage, grace and humility John displayed throughout his life that lifted him above the stars.

As the current head of NASA, I can say unequivocally that we are standing on John Glenn's shoulders as we pursue a human journey to Mars – a journey that would not be possible without his bravery and selfless dedication.

I know that I and countless other astronauts who had the privilege of following Senator Glenn into space can pinpoint his remarkable accomplishment as the first American to orbit Earth as the seed of our aspirations.

Even in his 70s, he continued to break barriers as he took to space again in the space shuttle. I was so proud to see this American legend soar again on Discovery's STS-95 mission. Just as with his first flight, he planted a seed – that someday Americans from all walks of life might experience space and the wonder of our planet from orbit, and see it as a unified whole.

Kennedy Space Center Director Bob Cabana recalls of that time just how excited John was to once again be “one of the guys,” and how happy and blessed he felt to continue his role in the space program he loved and valued so much.

Steve Lindsey, who is with us today, flew with John Glenn as the pilot of STS-95 aboard Discovery. He said, “What I learned about John through that experience is that he was authentic, every bit the hero the world and our nation holds him to be. John was, at his core, a man of integrity, humility, and kindness -- someone who put others ahead of himself, a team player and someone you could always count on.”

John Glenn always represented the best of our American ideals. His personal popularity was enormous, perhaps because he was so approachable, so genuine. People felt as though he could sit down in their parlor for a chat and be right at home, or like Steve says, that he would be a good neighbor.

John Glenn was deeply compassionate. He valued everyone, no matter his or her race or gender. He was ahead of his time in many ways. It was he who personally requested Katherine Johnson, a Black woman from West Virginia, to do the calculations for his historic flight as a backup to the computer! John was just like that.

John made us look up, not only to the sky, thinking we might actually be able to see him up there -- but toward the higher purpose that we as a country are always striving to achieve. He represented innovation and bravery and, with that infectious grin, he made us all feel good about ourselves.

John first flew to space aboard *Friendship 7* and he was truly a friend of humanity. A daring pilot who risked his life in World War II and Korea and worked tirelessly to advance the field of aviation long before he took to space. He dared the utmost on behalf of us all.

It is fitting that this day also marks the 113<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wright Brothers' first powered flight. Just as John advanced the frontiers of aviation, so too, will we follow his legacy to us to travel farther in space.

John Glenn received many accolades, but his true measure is taken not in awards, but in the respect he still commands on both ends of the political spectrum – by the large shadow he casts on our entire endeavor to travel farther into the solar system and by the bright flame of his inspiration, which continues to illuminate our way.

Godspeed, John Glenn, and thank you. We will never forget you.